PART TWO

Direct Leadership

The first three chapters of this manual cover the constants of leadership. They focus primarily on what a leader must BE. Part Two examines what a direct leader must KNOW and DO. Note the distinction between a skill, *knowing* something, and an action, *doing* something. The reason for this distinction bears repeating: knowledge isn't enough. You can't be a leader until you apply what you know, until you act and DO what you must.

Army leaders are grounded in the heritage, values, and tradition of the Army. They embody the warrior ethos, value continuous learning, and demonstrate the ability to lead and train their subordinates. Army leaders lead by example, train from experience, and maintain and enforce standards. They do these things while taking care of their people and adapting to a changing world. Chapters 4 and 5 discuss these subjects in detail.

The *warrior ethos* is the will to win with honor. Despite a thinking enemy, despite adverse conditions, you accomplish your mission. You express your character— the BE of BE, KNOW, DO—when you and your people confront a difficult mission and persevere. The warrior ethos applies to all soldiers and DA civilians, not just those who close with and destroy the enemy. It's the will to meet mission demands no matter what, the drive to get the job done whatever the cost.

Continuous learning requires dedication to improving your technical and tactical skills through study and practice. It also includes learning about the world around you—mastering new technology, studying other cultures, staying aware of current events at home and abroad. All these things affect your job as a leader.

Continuous learning also means consciously developing your *character* through study and reflection. It means reflecting on Army values and developing leader attributes. Broad knowledge and strong character underlie the right decisions in hard times. Seek to learn as much as you can about your job, your people, and yourself. That way you'll be prepared when the time comes for tough decisions. You'll BE a leader of character, KNOW the necessary skills, and DO the right thing.

Army leaders train and lead people. Part of this responsibility is maintaining and enforcing standards. Your subordinates expect you to show them what the standard is and train them to it: they expect you to lead by example. In addition, as an Army leader you're required to take care of your people. You may have to call on them to do things that seem impossible. You may have to ask them to make extraordinary sacrifices to accomplish the mission. If you train your people to standard, inspire the warrior ethos in them, and consistently look after their interests, they'll be prepared to accomplish the mission—anytime, anywhere.

Chapter 4

Direct Leadership Skills

Never get so caught up in cutting wood that you forget to sharpen your ax.

First Sergeant James J. Karolchyk, 1986

4-1. The Army's direct leaders perform a huge array of functions in all kinds of places and under all kinds of conditions. Even as you read these pages, someone is in the field in a cold place, someone else in a hot place. There are people headed to a training exercise and others headed home. Somewhere a motor pool is buzzing, a medical ward operating, supplies moving. Somewhere a duty NCO is conducting inspections and a sergeant of the guard is making the rounds. In all these places, no matter what the conditions or the mission, direct leaders are guided by the same principles, using the same skills, and performing the same actions.

4-2. This chapter discusses the skills a direct leader must master and develop. It addresses the KNOW of BE, KNOW, and DO for direct leaders. The skills are organized under the four skill groups Chapter 1 introduced: interpersonal, conceptual, technical, and tactical. (Appendix B lists performance indicators for leader skills.)

INTERPERSONAL SKILLS

4-3. A DA civilian supervisor was in a frenzy because all the material needed for a project wasn't available. The branch chief took the supervisor aside and said, "You're worrying about *things*. Things are not important; things will or won't be there. Worry about working with the people who will get the job done."

4-4. Since leadership is about people, it's not surprising to find interpersonal skills, what some call "people skills," at the top of the list of what an Army leader must KNOW. Figure 4-1 (on page 4-3) identifies the direct leader interpersonal skills. All these skills—communicating, team building, supervising, and counseling—require communication. They're all closely related; you can hardly use one without using the others.

COMMUNICATING

4-5. Since leadership is about getting other people to do what you want them to do, it follows that communicating—transmitting information so that it's clearly understood—is an important skill. After all, if people can't understand you, how will you ever let them know what you want? The other interpersonal skills—supervising, team building, and counseling—also depend on your ability to communicate.

4-6. If you take a moment to think about all the training you've received under the heading "communication," you'll see that it probably falls into four broad categories: speaking, reading, writing, and listening. You begin practicing speech early; many children are using words by the age of one. The heavy emphasis on reading and writing begins in school, if not before. Yet how many times have you been taught how to listen? Of the four forms of communication,

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Figure 4-1. Direct Leader Skills—Interpersonal

listening is the one in which most people receive the least amount of formal training. Yet for an Army leader, it's every bit as important as the others. It often comes first because you must listen and understand before you can decide what to say.

One-Way and Two-Way Communication

4-7. There are two common forms of one-way communication that are not necessarily the best way to exchange information: seeing and hearing. The key difference between one-way and two-way communication is that one-way communication—hearing or seeing something on television, reading a copy of a slide presentation, or even watching a training event unfold—may not give you a complete picture. You may have unanswered questions or even walk away with the wrong concept of what has occurred. That's why two-way communication is preferred when time and resources permit.

Active Listening

4-8. An important form of two-way communication is active listening. When you practice active listening, you send signals to the speaker that say, "I'm paying attention." Nod your head every once in a while, as if to say, "Yes, I understand." When you agree with the speaker, you might use an occasional "uh-huh." Look the speaker in the eye. Give the speaker your full attention. Don't allow yourself to be distracted by looking out the window, checking your watch, playing with something on your desk, or trying to do more than one thing at a time. Avoid interrupting the speaker; that's the cardinal sin of active listening.

4-9. Be aware of barriers to listening. Don't form your response while the other person is still talking. Don't allow yourself to become distracted by the fact that you're angry, or that you have a problem with the speaker, or that you have lots of other things you need to be thinking about. If you give in to these temptations, you'll miss most of what's being said.

Nonverbal Communication

4-10. In face-to-face communication, even in the simplest conversation, there's a great deal going on that has almost nothing to do with the words being used. Nonverbal communication involves all the signals you send with your facial expressions, tone of voice, and body language. Effective leaders know that communication includes both verbal and nonverbal cues. Look for them in this example.

The Checking Account

A young soldier named PVT Bell, new to the unit, approaches his team leader, SGT Adams, and says, "I have a problem I'd like to talk to you about."

The team leader makes time—right then if possible—to listen. Stopping, looking the soldier in the eye, and asking, "What's up?" sends many signals: *I am concerned about your problem. You're part of the team, and we help each other. What can I do to help?* All these signals, by the way, reinforce Army values.

The Checking Account (continued)

PVT Bell sees the leader is paying attention and continues, "Well, I have this checking account, see, and it's the first time I've had one. I have lots of checks left, but for some reason the PX [post exchange] is saying they're no good."

SGT Adams has seen this problem before: PVT Bell thinks that checks are like cash and has no idea that there must be money in the bank to cover checks written against the account. SGT Adams, no matter how tempted, doesn't say anything that would make PVT Bell think that his difficulty was anything other than the most important problem in the world. He is careful to make sure that PVT Bell doesn't think that he's anyone other than the most important soldier in the world. Instead, SGT Adams remembers life as a young soldier and how many things were new and strange. What may seem like an obvious problem to an experienced person isn't so obvious to an inexperienced one. Although the soldier's problem may seem funny, SGT Adams doesn't laugh at the subordinate. And because nonverbal cues are important, SGT Adams is careful that his tone of voice and facial expressions don't convey contempt or disregard for the subordinate.

Instead, the leader listens patiently as PVT Bell explains the problem; then SGT Adams reassures PVT Bell that it can be fixed and carefully explains the solution. What's more, SGT Adams follows up later to make sure the soldier has straightened things out with the bank.

A few months later, a newly promoted PFC Bell realizes that this problem must have looked pretty silly to someone with SGT Adams' experience. But PFC Bell will always remember the example SGT Adams set. Future leaders are groomed every day and reflect their past leaders. By the simple act of listening and communicating, SGT Adams won the loyalty of PFC Bell. And when the next batch of new soldiers arrives, PFC Bell, now the old-timer, will say to them, "Yeah, in all my experience, I've got to say this is one of the best units in the Army. And SGT Adams is the best team leader around. Why, I remember a time…"

4-11. SGT Adams performed crisis counseling, a leader action Appendix C discusses. Look for the communicating skills in this example. SGT Adams listened actively and controlled his nonverbal communication. He gave PVT Bell his full attention and was careful not to signal indifference or a lack of concern. SGT Adams' ability to do this shows the mental attribute of self-discipline and the emotional attribute of self-control, which you read about in Chapter 2. The leader also displayed empathy, that is, sensitivity to the feelings, thoughts, and experiences of another person. It's an important quality for a counselor.

SUPERVISING

If a squad leader doesn't check, and the guy on point has no batteries for his night vision goggles, he has just degraded the effectiveness of the entire unit.

A Company Commander, Desert Storm

4-12. Direct leaders check and recheck things. Leaders strike a balance between checking too much and not checking enough. Training subordinates to act independently is important; that's why direct leaders give instructions or their intent and then allow subordinates to work without constantly looking over their shoulders. Accomplishing the mission is equally important; that's why leaders check things—especially conditions critical to the mission (fuel levels), details a soldier might forget (spare batteries for night vision goggles), or tasks at the limit of what a soldier has accomplished before (preparing a new version of a report).

4-13. Checking minimizes the chance of oversights, mistakes, or other circumstances that might derail a mission. Checking also gives leaders a chance to see and recognize subordinates who are doing things right or make on-the-spot corrections when necessary. Consider this example: A platoon sergeant delegates to the platoon's squad leaders the

authority to get their squads ready for a tactical road march. The platoon sergeant oversees the activity but doesn't intervene unless errors, sloppy work, or lapses occur. The leader is there to answer questions or resolve problems that the squad leaders can't handle. This supervision ensures that the squads are prepared to standard and demonstrates to the squad leaders that the platoon sergeant cares about them and their people.

The Rusty Rifles Incident

While serving in the Republic of Vietnam, SFC Jackson was transferred from platoon sergeant of one platoon to platoon leader of another platoon in the same company. SFC Jackson quickly sized up the existing standards in the platoon. He wasn't pleased. One problem was that his soldiers were not keeping their weapons cleaned properly: rifles were dirty and rusty. He put out the word: weapons would be cleaned to standard each day, each squad leader would inspect each day, and he would inspect a sample of the weapons each day. He gave this order three days before the platoon was to go to the division rest and recuperation (R&R) area on the South China Sea.

The next day SFC Jackson checked several weapons in each squad. Most weapons were still unacceptable. He called the squad leaders together and explained the policy and his reasons for implementing it. SFC Jackson checked again the following day and still found dirty and rusty weapons. He decided there were two causes for the problem. First, the squad leaders were not doing their jobs. Second, the squad leaders and troops were bucking him—testing him to see who would really make the rules in the platoon. He sensed that, because he was new, they resisted his leadership. He knew he had a serious discipline problem he had to handle correctly. He called the squad leaders together again. Once again, he explained his standards clearly. He then said, "Tomorrow we are due to go on R&R for three days and I'll be inspecting rifles. We won't go on R&R until each weapon in this platoon meets the standard."

The next morning SFC Jackson inspected and found that most weapons in each squad were still below standard. He called the squad leaders together. With a determined look and a firm voice, he told them he would hold a formal in-ranks inspection at 1300 hours, even though the platoon was scheduled to board helicopters for R&R then. If every weapon didn't meet the standard, he would conduct another in-ranks inspection for squad leaders and troops with substandard weapons. He would continue inspections until all weapons met the standard.

At 1300 hours the platoon formed up, surly and angry with the new platoon leader, who was taking their hard-earned R&R time. The soldiers could hardly believe it, but his message was starting to sink in. This leader meant what he said. This time all weapons met the standard.

COUNSELING

Nothing will ever replace one person looking another in the eyes and telling the soldier his strengths and weaknesses. [Counseling] charts a path to success and diverts soldiers from heading down the wrong road.

Sergeant Major Randolph S. Hollingsworth

4-14. Counseling is subordinate-centered communication that produces a plan outlining actions necessary for subordinates to achieve individual or organizational goals. Effective counseling takes time, patience, and practice. As with everything else you do, you must develop your skills as a counselor. Seek feedback on how effective you are at counseling, study various counseling techniques, and make efforts to improve. (Appendix C discusses developmental counseling techniques.)

4-15. Proper counseling leads to a specific plan of action that the subordinate can use as a road map for improvement. Both parties, counselor and counseled, prepare this plan of action. The leader makes certain the subordinate understands and takes ownership of it. The best plan

of action in the world does no good if the subordinate doesn't understand it, follow it, and believe in it. And once the plan of action is agreed upon, the leader must follow up with one-on-one sessions to ensure the subordinate stays on track.

4-16. Remember the Army values of loyalty, duty, and selfless service require you to counsel your subordinates. The values of honor, integrity, and personal courage require you to give them straightforward feedback. And the Army value of respect requires you to find the best way to communicate that feedback so that your subordinates understand it. These Army values all point to the requirement for you to become a proficient counselor. Effective counseling helps your subordinates develop personally and professionally.

4-17. One of the most important duties of all direct, organizational, and strategic leaders is to develop subordinates. Mentoring, which links the operating and improving leader actions, plays a major part in developing competent and confident future leaders. Counseling is an interpersonal skill essential to effective mentoring. (Chapters 5, 6, and 7 discuss the direct, organizational, and strategic leader mentoring actions.)

CONCEPTUAL SKILLS

4-18. Conceptual skills include competence in handling ideas, thoughts, and concepts. Figure 4-2 (on page 4-7) lists the direct leader conceptual skills.

CRITICAL REASONING

4-19. Critical reasoning helps you think through problems. It's the key to understanding situations, finding causes, arriving at justifiable conclusions, making good judgments, and learning from the experience—in short, solving problems. Critical reasoning is an essential part of effective counseling and underlies ethical reasoning, another conceptual skill. It's also a central aspect of decision making, which Chapter 5 discusses.

4-20. The word "critical" here doesn't mean finding fault; it doesn't have a negative meaning at all. It means getting past the surface of the problem and thinking about it in depth. It means looking at a problem from several points of view instead of just being satisfied with the first answer that comes to mind. Army leaders need this ability because many of the choices they face are complex and offer no easy solution.

4-21. Sometime during your schooling you probably ran across a multiple choice test, one that required you to "choose answer a, b, c, or d" or "choose one response from column a and two from column b." Your job as an Army leader would be a lot easier if the problems you faced were presented that way, but leadership is a lot more complex than that. Sometimes just figuring out the real problem presents a huge hurdle; at other times you have to sort through distracting multiple problems to get to the real difficulty. On some occasions you know what the problem is but have no clue as to what an answer might be. On others you can come up with two or three answers that all look pretty good.

Finding the Real Problem

A platoon sergeant directs the platoon's squad leaders to counsel their soldiers every month and keep written records. Three months later, the leader finds the records are sloppy or incomplete; in many cases, there's no record at all. The platoon sergeant's first instinct is to chew out the squad leaders for ignoring his instructions. It even occurs to him to write a counseling annex to the platoon SOP so he can point to it the next time the squad leaders fail to follow instructions.

Finding the Real Problem (continued)

But those are just knee-jerk reactions and the platoon sergeant knows it. Instead of venting his frustration, the leader does a little investigating and finds that two squad leaders have never really been taught how to do formal, written counseling. The third one has no idea why counseling is important. So what looked like a disciplinary problem—the squad leaders disobeying instructions—turns out to be a training shortfall. By thinking beyond the surface and by checking, the platoon sergeant was able to isolate the real problem: that the squad leaders had not been trained in counseling. The next step is to begin training and motivating subordinates to do the tasks.

Figure 4-2. Direct Leader Skills—Conceptual

CREATIVE THINKING

4-22. Sometimes you run into a problem that you haven't seen before or an old problem that requires a new solution. Here you must apply imagination; a radical departure from the old way of doing things may be refreshing. Army leaders prevent complacency by finding ways to challenge subordinates with new approaches and ideas. In these cases, rely on your intuition, experience, and knowledge. Ask for input from your subordinates. Reinforce team building by making everybody responsible for, and shareholders in, the accomplishment of difficult tasks.

4-23. Creative thinking isn't some mysterious gift, nor does it have to be outlandish. It's not reserved for senior officers; all leaders think creatively. You employ it every day to solve small problems. A unit that deploys from a stateside post on a peace operation, for instance, may find itself in a small compound with limited athletic facilities and no room to run. Its leaders must devise new ways for their soldiers to maintain physical fitness. These may include sports and games, even games the local nationals play.

Pulling Dragons' Teeth

As American forces approached the Siegfried Line between Germany and France at the end of World War II, the armored advance was slowed by "dragons' teeth," concrete obstacles that looked like large, tightly spaced traffic cones. Engineers predicted it would take many days and tons of explosives to reduce the obstacles, which were heavily reinforced and deeply rooted. Then an NCO suggested using bulldozers to push dirt on top of the spikes, creating an earthen ramp to allow tanks to drive over the obstacles. This is but one example of the creative thinking by American soldiers of all ranks that contributed to victory in the ETO.

ETHICAL REASONING

4-24. Ethical leaders do the right things for the right reasons all the time, even when no one is watching. But figuring out what's the "right" thing is often, to put it mildly, a most difficult task. To fulfill your duty, maintain your integrity, and serve honorably, you must be able to reason ethically.

4-25. Occasionally, when there's little or no time, you'll have to make a snap decision based on your experience and intuition about what feels right. For Army leaders, such decisions are guided by Army values (discussed in Chapter 2), the institutional culture, and the organizational climate (discussed in Chapter 3). These shared values then serve as a basis for the whole team's buying into the leader's decision. But comfortable as this might be, you should not make all decisions on intuition.

4-26. When there's time to consider alternatives, ask for advice, and think things through, you can make a deliberate decision. First determine what's legally right by law and regulation. In gray areas requiring interpretation, apply Army values to the situation. Inside those boundaries, determine the best possible answer from among competing solutions, make your decision, and act on it.

4-27. The distinction between snap and deliberate decisions is important. In many decisions, you must think critically because your intuition—what feels right—may lead to the wrong answer. In combat especially, the intuitive response won't always work.

4-28. The moral application of force goes to the heart of military ethics. S. L. A. Marshall, a military historian as well as a brigadier general, has written that the typical soldier is often at a disadvantage in combat because he "comes from a civilization in which aggression, connected with the taking of a human life, is prohibited and unacceptable." Artist Jon Wolfe, an infantryman in Vietnam, once said that the first time he aimed his weapon at another human being, a "little voice" in the back of his mind asked, "Who gave you permission to do this?" That "little voice" comes, of course, from a lifetime of living within the law. You can determine the right thing to do in these very unusual circumstances only when you apply ethical as well as critical reasoning.

4-29. The right action in the situation you face may not be in regulations or field manuals. Even the most exhaustive regulations can't predict every situation. They're designed for the routine, not the exceptional. One of the most difficult tasks facing you as an Army leader is determining when a rule or regulation simply doesn't apply because the situation you're facing falls outside the set of conditions envisioned by those who wrote the regulation. Remember COL Chamberlain on Little Round Top. The drill manuals he had studied didn't contain the solution to the tactical problem he faced; neither this nor any other manual contain "cookbook" solutions to ethical questions you will confront. COL Chamberlain *applied* the doctrine he learned from the drill manuals. So you should apply Army values, your knowledge, and your experience to any decision you make and be prepared to accept the consequences of your actions. Study, reflection, and ethical reasoning can help you do this.

4-30. Ethical reasoning takes you through these steps:

- Define the problem.
- Know the relevant rules.
- Develop and evaluate courses of action.
- Choose the course of action that best represents Army values.

4-31. These steps correspond to some of the steps of the decision making leadership action in Chapter 5. Thus, ethical reasoning isn't a separate process you trot out only when you think you're facing an ethical question. It should be part of the thought process you use to make any decision. Your subordinates count on you to do more than make tactically sound decisions. They rely on you to make decisions that are ethically sound as well. You should always consider ethical factors and, when necessary, use Army values to gauge what's right.

4-32. That said, not every decision is an ethical problem. In fact, most decisions are ethically neutral. But that doesn't mean you don't have

to think about the ethical consequences of your actions. Only if you reflect on whether what you're asked to do or what you ask your people to do accords with Army values will you develop that sense of right and wrong that marks ethical people and great leaders. That sense of right and wrong alerts you to the presence of ethical aspects when you face a decision.

4-33. Ethical reasoning is an art, not a science, and sometimes the best answer is going to be hard to determine. Often, the hardest decisions are not between right and wrong, but between shades of right. Regulations may allow more than one choice. There may even be more than one good answer, or there may not be enough time to conduct a long review. In those cases, you must rely on your judgment.

Define the Problem

4-34. Defining the problem is the first step in making any decision. When you think a decision may have ethical aspects or effects, it's especially important to define it precisely. Know who said what—and what specifically was said, ordered, or demanded. Don't settle for secondhand information; get the details. Problems can be described in more than one way. This is the hardest step in solving any problem. It's especially difficult for decisions in the face of potential ethical conflicts. Too often some people come to rapid conclusions about the nature of a problem and end up applying solutions to what turn out to be only symptoms.

Know the Relevant Rules

4-35. This step is part of fact gathering, the second step in problem solving. Do your homework. Sometimes what looks like an ethical problem may stem from a misunderstanding of a regulation or policy, frustration, or overenthusiasm. Sometimes the person who gave an order or made a demand didn't check the regulation and a thorough reading may make the problem go away. Other times, a difficult situation results from trying to do something right in the wrong way. Also, some regulations leave room for interpretation; the problem then becomes a policy matter rather than an ethical one. If you do perceive an ethical problem, explain it to the person you think is causing it and try to come up with a better way to do the job.

Develop and Evaluate Courses of Action

4-36. Once you know the rules, lay out possible courses of action. As with the previous steps, you do this whenever you must make a decision. Next, consider these courses of action in view of Army values. Consider the consequences of your courses of action by asking yourself a few practical questions: Which course of action best upholds Army values? Do any of the courses of action compromise Army values? Does any course of action violate a principle, rule, or regulation identified in Step 2? Which course of action is in the best interest of the Army and of the nation? This part will feel like a juggling act; but with careful ethical reflection, you can reduce the chaos, determine the essentials, and choose the best course—even when that choice is the least bad of a set of undesirable options.

Choose the Course of Action That Best Represents Army Values

4-37. The last step in solving any problem is making a decision and acting on it. Leaders are paid to make decisions. As an Army leader, you're expected—by your bosses and your people—to make decisions that solve problems without violating Army values.

4-38. As a values-based organization, the Army uses expressed values—Army values—to provide its fundamental ethical framework. Army values lay out the ethical standards expected of soldiers and DA civilians. Taken together, Army values and ethical decision making provide a moral touchstone and a workable process that enable you to make sound ethical decisions and take right actions confidently.

4-39. The ethical aspects of some decisions are more obvious that those of others. This example contains an obvious ethical problem. The issues will seldom be so clear-cut; however, as you read the example, focus on the steps SGT Kirk follows as he moves toward an ethical decision. Follow the same steps when you seek to do the right thing.

The EFMB Test

SGT Kirk, who has already earned the Expert Field Medical Badge (EFMB), is assigned as a grader on the division's EFMB course. Sergeant Kirk's squad leader, SSG Michaels, passes through SGT Kirk's station and fails the task. Just before SGT Kirk records the score, SSG Michaels pulls him aside.

"I need my EFMB to get promoted," SSG Michaels says. "You can really help me out here; it's only a couple of points anyway. No big deal. Show a little loyalty."

SGT Kirk wants to help SSG Michaels, who's been an excellent squad leader and who's loyal to his subordinates. SSG Michaels even spent two Saturdays helping SGT Kirk prepare for his promotion board. If SGT Kirk wanted to make this easy on himself, he would say the choice is between honesty and loyalty. Then he could choose loyalty, falsify the score, and send everyone home happy. His life under SSG Michaels would probably be much easier too.

However, SGT Kirk would not have defined the problem correctly. (Remember, defining the problem is often the hardest step in ethical reasoning.) SGT Kirk knows the choice isn't between loyalty and honesty. Loyalty doesn't require that he lie. In fact, lying would be disloyal to the Army, himself, and the soldiers who met the standard. To falsify the score would also be a violation of the trust and confidence the Army placed in him when he was made an NCO and a grader. SGT Kirk knows that loyalty to the Army and the NCO corps comes first and that giving SSG Michaels a passing score would be granting the squad leader an unfair advantage. SGT Kirk knows it would be wrong to be a coward in the face of this ethical choice, just as it would be wrong to be a coward in battle. And if all that were not enough, when SGT Kirk imagines seeing the incident in the newspaper the next morning—Trusted NCO Lies to Help Boss—he knows what he must do.

4-40. When SGT Kirk stands his ground and does the right thing, it may cost him some pain in the short run, but the entire Army benefits. If he makes the wrong choice, he weakens the Army. Whether or not the Army lives by its values isn't just up to generals and colonels; it's up to each of the thousands of SGT Kirks, the Army leaders who must make tough calls when no one is watching, when the easy thing to do is the wrong thing to do.

REFLECTIVE THINKING

4-41. Leader development doesn't occur in a vacuum. All leaders must be open to feedback on their performance from multiple perspectives—seniors, peers, and subordinates. But being open to feedback is only one part of the equation. As a leader, you must also listen to and use the feedback: you must be able to reflect. Reflecting is the ability to take information, assess it, and apply it to behavior to explain why things did or did not go well. You can then use the resulting explanations to improve future behavior. Good leaders are always striving to become better leaders. This means you need consistently to assess your strengths and weaknesses and reflect on what you can do to sustain your strengths and correct your weaknesses. To become a better leader, you must be willing to change.

4-42. For reasons discussed fully in Chapter 5, the Army often places a premium on doing—on the third element of BE, KNOW, DO. All Army leaders are busy dealing with what's on their plates and investing a lot of energy in accomplishing tasks. But how often do they take the time to STOP and really THINK about what they are doing? How often have you seen this sign on a leader's door: Do Not Disturb—Busy Reflecting? Not often. Well, good leaders need to take the time to think and reflect. Schedule it; start really exercising your capacity to get feedback. Then reflect on it and use it to improve. There's nothing wrong with making mistakes, but there's plenty wrong with not learning from those mistakes. Reflection is the means to that end.

TECHNICAL SKILLS

The first thing the senior NCOs had to do was to determine who wasn't qualified with his weapon, who didn't have his protective mask properly tested and sealed—just all the basic little things. Those things had to be determined real fast.

A Command Sergeant Major, Desert Storm

Figure 4-3. Direct Leader Skills—Technical

KNOWING EQUIPMENT

4-43. Technical skill is skill with things—equipment, weapons, systems—everything from the towing winch on the front of a vehicle to the computer that keeps track of corps personnel actions. Direct leaders must know their equipment and how to operate it. Figure 4-3 highlights direct leader technical skills. Technical manuals, training circulars, SOPs, and all the other publications necessary for efficient, effective performance explain specific skills more completely.

4-44. Direct leaders are closer to their equipment than organizational and strategic leaders. Thus, they have a greater need to know how it works and how to use it. In addition, direct leaders are the experts who are called upon to solve problems with the equipment, the ones who figure out how to make it work better, how to apply it, how to fix it—even how to modify it. Sergeants, junior officers, warrant officers, wage grade employees, and journeymen are the Army's technical experts and best teachers. Subordinates expect their first-line leaders to know their equipment and be experts in all the applicable technical skills.

OPERATING EQUIPMENT

4-45. Direct leaders know how to operate their equipment and make sure their people do as well. They set the example with a hands-on approach. When new equipment arrives, direct leaders find out how it works, learn how to use it themselves, and train their subordinates to do the same.

Technical Skill into Combat Power

Technical skill gave the Army a decided advantage in the 1944 battle for France. For example, the German Army had nothing like the US Army's maintenance battalions. Such an organization was a new idea, and a good one. These machine-age units were able to return almost half the battle-damaged tanks to action within two days. The job was done by young men who had been working at gas stations and body shops two years earlier and had brought their skill into the service of their country. Instead of fixing cars, they replaced damaged tank tracks, welded patches on the armor, and repaired engines. These combat supporters dragged tanks that were beyond repair to the rear and stripped them for parts. The Germans just left theirs in place.

I felt we had to get back to the basic soldier skills. The basics of setting up a training schedule for every soldier every day. We had to execute the standard field disciplines, such as NCOs checking weapons cleanliness and ensuring soldiers practiced personal hygiene daily. Our job is to go out there and kill the enemy. In order to do that, as Fehrenbach writes in [his study of the Korean Conflict entitled] This Kind of War*, we have to have disciplined teams; discipline brings pride to the unit. Discipline coupled with tough, realistic training is the key to high morale in units. Soldiers want to belong to good outfits, and our job as leaders is to give them the best outfit we can.*

A Company Commander, Desert Storm

4-46. This company commander is talking about two levels of skill. First is the individual level: soldiers are trained with their equipment and know how to do their jobs. Next is the collective level: leaders take these trained individuals and form them into teams. The result: a whole greater than the sum of its parts, a team that's more than just a collection of trained individuals, an organization that's capable of much more than any one of its elements. (FM 25-101 discusses how to integrate individual, collective, and leader training).

TACTICAL SKILLS

Man is and always will be the supreme element in combat, and upon the skill, the courage and endurance, and the fighting heart of the individual soldier the issue will ultimately depend.

General Matthew B. Ridgway
Former Army Chief of Staff

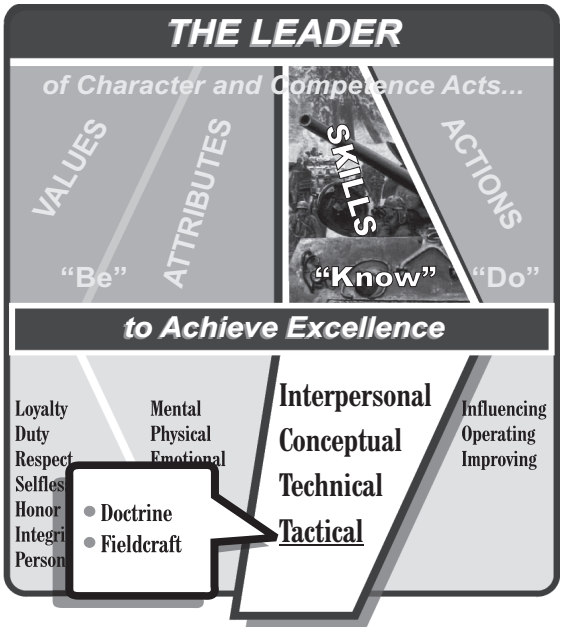

Figure 4-4. Direct Leader Skills—Tactical

DOCTRINE

4-47. Tactics is the art and science of employing available means to win battles and engagements. The science of tactics encompasses capabilities, techniques, and procedures that can be codified. The art of tactics includes the creative and flexible array of means to accomplish assigned missions, decision making when faced with an intelligent enemy, and the effects of combat on soldiers. Together, FM 100-34, FM 100-40, and branch-specific doctrinal manuals capture the tactical skills that are essential to mastering both the science and the art of tactics. Figure 4-4 highlights direct leader tactical skills.

FIELDCRAFT

4-48. Fieldcraft consists of the skills soldiers need to sustain themselves in the field. Proficiency in fieldcraft reduces the likelihood soldiers will become casualties. The requirement to be able to do one's job in a field environment distinguishes the soldier's profession from most civilian occupations. Likewise, the

requirement that Army leaders make sure their soldiers take care of themselves and provide them with the means to do so is unique.

4-49. The Soldier's Manual of Common Tasks lists the individual skills all soldiers must master to operate effectively in the field. Those skills include everything from how to stay healthy, to how to pitch a tent, to how to run a heater. Some military occupational specialties (MOS) require proficiency in additional fieldcraft skills. Soldier's Manuals for these MOS list them.

4-50. Army leaders gain proficiency in fieldcraft through schooling, study, and practice. Once learned, few fieldcraft skills are difficult. However, they are easy to neglect during exercises, when everyone knows that the exercise will end at a specific time, sick and injured soldiers are always evacuated, and the adversary isn't using real ammunition. During peacetime, it's up to Army leaders to enforce tactical discipline, to make sure their soldiers practice the fieldcraft skills that will keep them from becoming casualties—battle or nonbattle—during operations.

TACTICAL SKILLS AND TRAINING

4-51. Direct leaders are the Army's primary tactical trainers, both for individuals and for teams. Practicing tactical skills is often challenging. The best way to improve individual and collective skills is to replicate operational conditions. Unfortunately, Army leaders can't always get the whole unit out in the field to practice maneuvers, so they make do with training parts of it separately. Sometimes they can't get the people, the time, and the money all together at the right time and the right place to train the entire team. There are always training distracters. There will always be a hundred excuses not to train together and one reason why such training must occur: units fight as they train. (FM 25-100 and FM 25-101 discuss training principles and techniques.)

4-52. Unfortunately, the Army has been caught unprepared for war more than once. In July 1950, American troops who had been on occupation duty in Japan were thrown into combat when North Korean forces invaded South Korea. Ill-trained, ill-equipped, and out of shape, they went into action and were overrun. However, that same conflict provides another example of how well things can go when a direct leader has tactical skill, the ability to pull people and things together into a team. Near the end of November 1950, American forces were chasing the remnants of the broken North Korean People's Army into the remote northern corners of the Korean Peninsula. Two American units pushed all the way to the Yalu River, which forms the boundary between North Korea and the People's Republic of China. One was the 17th Infantry Regiment. The other was a task force commanded by a 24-year-old first lieutenant named Joseph Kingston.

Task Force Kingston

1LT Joseph Kingston, a boyish-looking platoon leader in K Company, 3d Battalion, 32d Infantry, was the lead element for his battalion's move northward. The terrain was mountainous, the weather bitterly cold—the temperature often below zero—and the cornered enemy still dangerous. 1LT Kingston inched his way forward, with the battalion adding elements to his force. He had antiaircraft jeeps mounted with quad .50 caliber machine guns, a tank, a squad (later a platoon) of engineers, and an artillery forward observer. Some of these attachments were commanded by lieutenants who outranked him, as did a captain who was the tactical air controller. But 1LT Kingston remained in command, and battalion headquarters began referring to Task Force Kingston.

Bogged down in Yongsong-ni with casualties mounting, Task Force Kingston received reinforcements that brought the number of men to nearly 300. Despite tough fighting, the force continued to move northward. 1LT Kingston's battalion commander wanted him to remain in command, even though they sent several more officers who outranked 1LT Kingston. One of the

Task Force Kingston (continued)

attached units was a rifle company, commanded by a captain. But the arrangement worked, mostly because 1LT Kingston himself was an able leader. Hit while leading an assault on one enemy stronghold, he managed to toss a grenade just as a North Korean soldier shot him in the head. His helmet, badly grazed, saved his life. His personal courage inspired his men and the soldiers from the widely varied units who were under his control. Task Force Kingston was commanded by the soldier who showed, by courage and personal example, that he could handle the job.

4-53. 1LT Kingston made the task force work by applying skills at a level of responsibility far above what was normal for a soldier of his rank and experience. He knew how to shoot, move, and communicate. He knew the fundamentals of his profession. He employed the weapons under his command and controlled a rather unwieldy collection of combat assets. He understood small-unit tactics and applied his reasoning skills to make decisions. He fostered a sense of teamwork, even in this collection of units that had never trained together. Finally, he set the example with personal courage.

SUMMARY

4-54. Direct leadership is face-to-face, first-line leadership. It takes place in organizations where subordinates are used to seeing their leaders all the time: teams, squads, sections, platoons, companies, and battalions. To be effective, direct leaders must master many interpersonal, conceptual, technical, and tactical skills.

4-55. Direct leaders are first-line leaders. They apply the conceptual skills of critical reasoning and creative thinking to determine the best way to accomplish the mission. They use ethical reasoning to make sure their choice is the right thing to do, and they use reflective thinking to assess and improve team performance, their subordinates, and themselves. They employ the interpersonal skills of communicating and supervising to get the job done. They develop their people by mentoring and counseling and mold them into cohesive teams by training them to standard.

4-56. Direct leaders are the Army's technical experts and best teachers. Both their bosses and their people expect them to know their equipment and be experts in all the applicable technical skills. On top of that, direct leaders combine those skills with the tactical skills of doctrine, fieldcraft, and training to accomplish tactical missions.

4-57. Direct leaders use their competence to foster discipline in their units and to develop soldiers and DA civilians of character. They use their mastery of equipment and doctrine to train their subordinates to standard. They create and sustain teams with the skill, trust, and confidence to succeed—in peace and war.